Study Aids – Citing Sources

When you begin writing a history paper that is based upon reading sources and/or research, you should keep the following principles in mind:

1) You are required to give credit to others for their ideas and words (doing otherwise is intellectually dishonest).
2) Good historical arguments depend on using evidence to construct a convincing argument; citing sources correctly refers a reader to the evidence of source and, thus contributes to the effectiveness of the argument.
3) Just like with a lab notebook and an experiment, you must document the steps you took so that your work could be repeated by another person reading your notes. This is why your paper must include citations and (for longer papers) a bibliography. Not doing so means that the reader cannot properly reconstruct your argument.

All three of these principles dictate that history papers must use a system of references to make their arguments. The required citation style for the WMU History Department is the current edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS); for the basics see Kate Turabian’s *Manual* which explains the basics of CMS for students (both available electronically on the WMU Library History Subject Guide or in the WMU library Reference section). In all cases, the more complete CMS supersedes Turabian about citation mechanics.

A brief explanation of how to cite sources follows.

Footnote Basics (How to Cite)  |  When and Where to Cite  |  Bibliography

**Footnote Basics (How to Cite):**

All papers submitted in Prof. Berkhofer’s undergraduate classes should use footnotes rather than endnotes, which are easier to read. Specifically, use the Chicago Manual of Style “humanities” style for footnotes, explained below.

Once you have begun writing your paper, you will use evidence taken from a primary source, or you will refer to the ideas or words written by a historian. Whether you use an idea, the exact words, or paraphrase, you are required to refer to the source or give that historian credit for her or his creation; failure to do so is academic fraud and constitutes plagiarism (see Plagiarism and Academic Conduct for an explanation). While you are in the process of writing the draft of a paper, it is easier to write the required reference as you go along. To do so, insert a footnote using your word processor at the end of a sentence, and then type the required citation in the note inserted at the bottom of the page. Below is the basic format for a reference to a book:

**Example 1:** “Giovanni’s procurators pursued their strategy of procrastination.”\(^1\)

The example above is the first reference to the book and so requires the complete citation. According the Chicago Manual of Style, the first reference to a book should include the author's full name, the full title of the book, place and year of publication, and the page(s) from which you drew the information. After the first reference, you may simply use author's last name, a short title, and the page number(s). For example:

**Example 2:** Brucker argues that Giovanni's legal assistants tried to stall for time.\(^2\)


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Please note that there are different citation requirements for articles, webpages, and the various other forms of media one might reference. One very common problem in undergraduate classes is referring to primary source contained in the class source reader, which is an edited collection. This means that one must refer both to the primary source used (to make the evidentiary link clear) and the edition in which it is contained (in order to make the version used and page number clear). Often, these sources are drawn from translations or editions beyond the book and so would, in the full rigor of CMS citation be a very long citation. However, for the purposes of Prof. Berkhofer’s undergraduate classes, a shortened form or citation which makes the primary source and the reader it is taken from clear is acceptable, for convenience of all involved. An example of such a citation is below:

**Example 3:** “According to worldly law, anyone who shall have made any misrepresentation concerning these things shall be compelled by the judicial power to pay one hundred pounds of gold.”\(^3\)


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**Cautionary Note on What Not to Do:**

Some students learn to write citations by inserting the author’s last name and a page number in parenthesis at the end of a sentence. This method (known as the MLA Style) is what is taught in most English classes, but it is not the same as the one used in History classes. This is because History requires more information to retrace references to reconstruct a paper’s use of sources as evidence. If you usually use this style, please convert your notes to the CMS "humanities" style for footnotes, as explained above.

**When and Where to Cite:**

Generally speaking, references are required as needed to clarify the relationship between your paper’s argument and the primary sources or secondary works used to construct it. The most common occasions are as follows:
1) If you use the exact words of a primary source or secondary work, you must enclose those words in quotations marks and provide a citation, as shown in Example 1 above.

2) If you paraphrase the content or major ideas of a primary source or secondary work, you must provide a citation, as shown in Example 2 above. Such references should be placed at the end of specific sentences for particular words/ideas, or sometimes at the end of a group of sentences paraphrasing material from a long, continuous section of a source or work, in order to avoid repetition of the same reference.

3) Any idea, concept, or key wording borrowed from a source or other work must be acknowledged with a reference. One common example is an idea or argument drawn from a textbook or a lecture, but others include those gathered from scholarly introductions to sources or from the internet.

If there is any doubt about whether a reference is required, it is best to include one. You should also speak with your instructor or consult style manuals for further advice.

Bibliography:

Bibliographies are necessary for papers which use multiple sources. This is true of all research papers and longer comparative source analysis papers in Prof. Berkhofer’s upper-division History courses. [However, for short source analysis papers (2-3 pages, especially those which only use the class materials in general education courses) footnotes alone will suffice, provided the first reference is complete.]

A bibliography contains a detailed list of all the works you consulted in writing the paper,’ at a minimum it includes all works cited in the paper. It may also include influential works consulted, whether you cited material from those sources or works in the text itself. A bibliography is placed in a separate section, at the paper's end, and is labeled “Bibliography” or “Works Cited” so that the reader can clearly identify it.

Your bibliography should be arranged alphabetically by the last name of the author. See Chicago Manual of Style for more information. A brief example is given below:

